

The Honorable Lisa Jackson, Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson,

Thank you for standing your ground and maintaining the July 23rd deadline for public comment on the Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment. I commend you for your leadership and thank you for looking out for the Alaskan's whose livelihoods depend on clean water and healthy salmon populations.

Summer is the busiest of all seasons in Bristol Bay but as all the staffs save during their trip to Anchorage Bristol Bay this spring - this issue is as important as it gets for the people here. I wish so that people stopped working on their boats, repairing their nets, and doing last minute preparation for the coming season to show up for me and speak up in support of the Watershed Assessment.

For years we, lodge owners, managers, guides and outfitters we have operated under the shadow of potential development. Although we have continued to invest businesses, bring people to this wild region, and do everything in our power to keep salmon and trout we depend on thriving, we have had no to talk about what if so that might happen if we move forward.

We want to use authority under 404(c) of the Clean Water Act to protect Bristol Bay's clean water, fish and outstanding recreational areas as fast as possible and eliminate some of the what if's associated with large scale mining. This will ensure that the existing economies and lifestyles that depend on the certainty of the salmon returning each year can continue to thrive.

We, the undersigned lodge owners, managers and outfitters, support the work that you and your staff have done to complete the Watershed Assessment and commend you for your efficiency in effectively gathering a wide range of public comments. Now we urge you to move forward and protect Bristol Bay using your responsibilities under 404(c) of the Clean Water Act as fast as reasonably possible.

Sincerely,

**Alaska Sportsman's Lodge**  
Brian Kraft, Owner  
Igigiug, AK 99613

**Alaska's Fishing Unlimited, Inc.**

Martin Kvickeng, President

Port Alsworth, AK

**No. 55 Lodge**

John Holman, President

King Salmon, AK

**Bristol Bay Mission Lodge**

Sarah Fulhart, General Manager

Aleknagik, AK

**Copper River Lodge**

Pat Vermillion, Owner

Dillingham, AK

**Royal Coachman Lodge**

Pat Vermillion, Owner

Dillingham, AK

**Alaska Sportsman's Bear Trail Lodge**

Nanci Morris Lyon, Owner

King Salmon, AK

**Bristol Bay Lodge**

Steven Laurent, Manager

Dillingham, AK

**Frontier River Guides**

Marty Decker, Owner

Anchorage, AK

**Katmailand Inc.**

Raymond "Sonny" Petersen, President

Kulik Lodge, AK

Cc: Senator Lisa Murkowski

Senator Mark Begich

Representative Don Young



## **Protect fish, wildlife and jobs: Bristol Bay can't take large mines**

by Bud Hodson and Sonny Petersen  
05.27.12 - 12:01 am

### **Community perspective**

As many Alaskans know, there are some unbeatable places to work, hunt and fish throughout this state — and in many cases not far from our back porch. As seasoned guides and lodge owners, we've had the opportunity to live, work and play in one of the state's crown jewels — Bristol Bay. Through the years, we've introduced thousands of travelers — some Alaskans, others from Outside — to this pristine region and the trophy-sized fish of Bristol Bay's famed rivers.

Bristol Bay is on the map because of fish. For more than 75 years, anglers from far and wide have flocked to this area to catch hauntingly large rainbow trout and salmon in numbers found nowhere else in the world. In 1950, the region's lodge and tourism industry was born when Ray Petersen, Sonny's dad, founded Anglers Paradise lodges. By 1959, more than 1,000 guests visited Petersen's famous Brooks Lodge each summer. Today, nearly 65,000 recreational travelers come to Bristol Bay each year to experience world-class fishing at one of approximately 70 lodges or do-it-yourself campsites. For Alaskans, this has created a flourishing economy, with sport fishing generating more than 800 jobs and \$60 million in revenue each year.

Sadly, the threat of large-scale mining could soon make one of the region's most well-established economic engines a thing of the past. That's because in addition to the bountiful fish population, Bristol Bay is also home to one of the world's largest gold, copper and molybdenum deposits. The threats of hard-rock mining — most notably, Pebble Mine — to the fish and wildlife habitat in this region are severe.

While proponents of the mine say there is little chance of harming the fish, other experts offer some real concerns. For example, small amounts of copper above naturally occurring levels in water can significantly impact a salmon's ability to find its natal spawning stream. Pebble is much larger than all other hard-rock mines in Alaska combined and estimated to produce nearly 10 billion tons of waste to be permanently stored on site in the seismically active region. Additionally, the mining industry has a poor track record when it comes to maintaining existing water quality. Today very few

hard-rock mines — if any — haven't had some sort of water quality impact in the United States.

Bristol Bay's existing jobs and culture depend on healthy runs of fish. A mine the size of Pebble has never been built in North America, and certainly not in such important fish habitat. At best Pebble is an experiment — and Alaskans can't afford to experiment with existing jobs, healthy wildlife populations and world-renowned hunting and fishing opportunities.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released an assessment of the Bristol Bay watershed. In it, the agency came to the same conclusion many Alaskans have already made — the potential threats of a mine like Pebble could permanently destroy this one-of-a-kind fishery. While it's an important step in the right direction, the pursuit to protect Bristol Bay is not over. The EPA should invoke its authority through the Clean Water Act Section 404(c) to protect the watershed from future mining or large-scale development. These restrictions are rooted in well-established precedents and long-standing policies within the Clean Water Act 404 program, and would provide long-term security for the people of Bristol Bay and Alaska's economy.

*Bud Hodson has been in the Alaska sportfishing business for over 32 years and is a long-time Alaskan. He owns and operates Tikchik Narrows Lodge, one of Bristol Bay's first lodges.*

*Sonny Petersen is owner and operator of Katmailand, and his family pioneered sport fishing and tourism in Bristol Bay. In 1974, he began an air taxi operation, Katmai Air. He spends his summers managing the three lodges and Katmai Air and spends his winters in Anchorage preparing for the next season.*

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